REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 31, 2005. Claims 1 to 15 are pending in the application. Claims 1 to 3, 5 to 8 and 10 to 15 have been amended, and Claims 1 and 12 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for alleged failure to comply with the enablement requirement. In particular, it was alleged that the term "cash content flash processing" is not described in the specification so as to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make or use the invention.

Applicants have amended Claim 3 by replacing the term "cash content flash processing" with "cache memory flash processing", which is seen to be described at least at page 10, line 24 to page 11, line 9 of the specification. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0032839 (Yamamoto). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Claim 1

Independent Claim 1 as amended is directed to a storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, and has a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus and a communication interface with the information processing apparatus. The storage unit includes a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium, and receiving means for receiving an eject instruction of ejecting the storage unit from the information apparatus. The storage unit

also includes judging means for judging whether or not the storage unit is in an ejectable state, and output means for externally outputting an eject permission signal to the information apparatus if the judging means judges that the storage unit is in the ejectable state.

Thus, among its many features, the invention of Claim 1 provides for (i) judging whether or not a storage unit, which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, is in an ejectable state, and (ii) externally outputting an eject permission signal to the information apparatus if it is judged that the storage unit is in the ejectable state.

By virtue of the foregoing, in which a judgement is made as to whether or not a storage unit is in an ejectable state, and in which an eject permission signal is externally output to an information apparatus if the storage unit is in the ejectable state, the storage unit can be more safely ejected.

For example, one representative embodiment is described at page 3, lines 12 to 17 of the specification. In particular, in a situation where writing of data in cache memory is still in progress while a host apparatus determines that a write operation has ended, ejection of the storage unit can be handled.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of Claim 1. In particular, Yamamoto is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of (i) judging whether or not a storage unit, which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, is in an ejectable state, and (ii) externally outputting an eject permission signal to the information apparatus if it is judged that the storage unit is in the ejectable state.

As understood by Applicants, Yamamoto discloses a cache mechanism of a browser apparatus as a World Wide Web (WWW) client. See Yamamoto, Abstract. In the case where a user operates an eject button, the ejection of a storage medium is not immediately conducted, but a routine for performing a write processing required on a system side is started. After the write processing is completed, a signal indicating the instruction for or permission of ejection of the storage medium is given from the system side to a memory device. See Yamamoto, paragraph 11.

As such, Yamamoto is seen to base ejection of a storage medium on whether or not a write processing is completed on a system side. However, nothing in Yamamoto is seen to disclose or suggest judging whether or not a storage unit is in an ejectable state. Moreover, Yamamoto is not seen to disclose or suggest that an eject permission signal is externally output to an information apparatus if it is judged that the storage unit is in the ejectable state.

Furthermore, Yamamoto is not seen to disclose or suggest the attendant benefits provided by such judging and externally outputtting, such as the ability to handle ejection of a storage unit in a case where writing of data in cache memory is still in progress while a host apparatus determines that a write operation has ended.

Allowance of Claim 1 is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 12

Independent Claim 12 as amended is directed to an eject control method for a storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus. The storage unit has a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus, a communication interface with the information processing apparatus and a controller for

controlling storage of data into the storage medium. The method includes a providing step of causing the information processing apparatus to provide a user interface, and an issuing step of issuing an eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with user operation to the user interface. The method also includes a state shift step of shifting the storage unit to an ejectable state in accordance with the eject instruction issued in the issuing step, and an output step of causing the storage unit to output an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus after completion of shifting the storage unit to the ejectable state in the state shift step, in accordance with the eject instruction. In addition, the method includes an eject step of causing the information processing apparatus to eject the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal.

Thus among its many features, the invention of Claim 12 provides for (i) shifting a storage unit, which is detachable from an information processing apparatus, to an ejectable state in accordance with an issued eject instruction, and (ii) causing the storage unit to output an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus after completion of the shifting to the ejectable state. The applied reference of Yamamoto is not seen to disclose or suggest at least these features.

As noted above, Yamamoto is seen to disclose that ejection of a storage medium is based on whether or not a write processing is completed on a system side. However, nothing in Yamamoto is seen to disclose or suggest that a storage unit is shifted, muchless that the storage unit is shifted to an ejectable state in accordance with an issued eject instruction. Moreover, Yamamoto is not seen to disclose or suggest that the storage unit is caused to output an eject permission signal to the information processing apparatus after completion of the shifting to the ejectable state.

Allowance of Claim 12 is therefore respectfully requested.

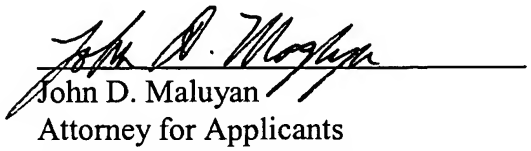
Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1 and 12 as amended are believed to be allowable over the applied reference.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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